Poor, beautiful Ingrid. Her life seems to be a series of unrelieved tragedies. Everything with which she is associated turns out badly. Innocent as she is of evil intent, well-behaved as she is, harmless as are her actions, nothing is ever right with her, and nothing with which she is even indirectly connected ever succeeds.

Her divorce by Roberto cannot be blamed on her, for she gave him no just cause. His eye just roved. Nor can she be faulted for the temporary alliance with The Young Emden. That she lost their offspring can properly be attributed to her too-long-delayed motherhood and her bursting emotion for Roberto, with whom she had just been remarried.

Having been remarried, quite properly she considered her place with him and Das. However, she carried this family feeling a little too far, not uncommon among geese. Morever, it is more than possible that Roberto communicated his desires to her. Whatever the cause, she abandoned the nest she had made for her children by Young Emden. Instead of establishing a new nest near Das', where I had established separate but equal facilities - in fact, they were identical- she moved right in with Das. Those who have never lived with geese may take this as a sign of warmth and comity in the harem, as superficially it seems to be. The two girls got along without any conflict. Each carefully covered

the other's eggs when she left the nest. Roberto's ~~extra~~ responsibilities were simplified, for like most ganders, he mounts guard while his mates are on the nest. Thus his entire menage was, for a while, always nearby, and he didn't have to go charging from one to the other whenever he imagined either under threat. In practise, he would have remained with Daw, whever she was, for clearly she was his favorite. I doubt if he would have ledt her side had Ingrid been faced with a real danger.

The problem with two geese using the same nest arrises when they go to setting. Never have I seen two women geese who could carry off this chore communially. Each wants all the eggs, and neither can cover all of them. Whether or not they fight, the poor eggs stff suffer and frequently are broken. Also, when they are close to each other, there reemins an area betweem their warm bodies that is without benefit of the heat they generate. The eggs in this area do not incubate properly, and as they maneuver around, they also maneuver the eggs. The result is that the exposed eggs are sometimes rolled under their bodies and are replaced by eggs that have been incubating. Usually, embyrionic growth stops and the unhatched goslings perish. Our worst problem of this sort was from Mrs. Cracy China, who I had to barricade from the nest she always wanted to share.

In an effort to cope with this hazard to all the Romen young, I asked an old friend, Henry Wessel, to incubate the eggs for me. I didn't know whether Ingrid's eggs were fertile. While there were indications her remarriage to Roberto was enduring, there were also unmistakeable signgs of indifference manifested by each of them. The first two clutches of eggs, sixteen in all, went into Mr. Wessel's incubator late in March. Meanwhile, I hoped that either Ingrid or Das would have a delayed second clutch, on which she might then set. If again their laying coincided, I again planned to have Mr. Wessel incubate the eggs.

By having him incubate all the eggs, we could, of course, expect many more goslings, for normally, fowl cannot lay and set simultaneously. The hormonal changes required for setting block their ovulation. By not letting them set, they can continue to lay eggs. Three clutches for most domesticated breeds is about normal. Thus it is possible to expect each to produce eggs that could yield perhaps as many as two dozen goslings.

But we find the goose family a particularly attractive sight. The father marches at the head of the procession, with the young in line. The mother brings up the rear. With more responsibility that some families of humen people, the goose people educate and shelter their young. They teach the children what to do and what not to do, what is good to eat and what to avoid, what might harmthem

and what is safe or harmless. Human babies are rarely as attentive or mindful of instructions from their parents.

Goslings are born with a genetic conversational ability. Their parents make meaningful sounds and combinations of sounds. These approximate speech. Without having ever heard it before, the goslings comprehend every word and are almost unvaryingly obedient.

They also learn by watching, either the mother or a foster mother. Once we had a Rhode Island pullet who hatched three goslings from the only eggs that survived a sonic boom. I cannot say these goslings were obedient to her. Possibly this was because they were soon much larger than she. Also, one of the trio turned out to be a remarkably precocious and independent scamp. But because we had to keep the biddie and her "children", which is what she considered them, near the house, we could observe them carefully. What she wanted them to eat she picked up in her beak andthen expelled, ep repeating the act until the goslings followed suit. This they learned to do very rapidly. Actually, without a mother to teach them, nature and instinct would guide them quite reliably. But it is a beautiful sight to wtach this process, to observe the close family relationships, and we love to watch it. Hence we were anxious for Ingrid and Das each to hatch her own brood, even at the cost of a larger crop of goslings.

The first candling of the incubating eggs left Mr. Wessel uncertain of the fertility of about half. This fit with out fear Ingrid was somewhat distant toward Roberto. But, knowing our desire for the goslings, Mr. Well Wessel kept them in the incubator. For several weeks we heard nothing from him and our own affairs so occupied us we neglected to phone him and inquire about the progress of the incubations. I was spending most of my time in New York City in connection with another book and my wife was busy typing other manuscripts.

By an odd coincidence, the day I made an unexpected return to the farm my wife seized an opportunity to visit an ill uncle. Mr. Wessel visitrd us at a time neither of us was home. My wife, on returning, found a note on the door in which he merely mentioned having been there with his great grandson. A half-hour later I arrived and busied myself with unloading the car and recounting developments in New York City to my wife. It was not until several hours later that I discovered a bok of goose eggs placed where neither cats nor dogs could accidently upset it. Immediately I assumed our honest friend had gone to this touble to show the eggs were infertile, we we had our own mark on each of oureggs and would readily exaime identify them. It wasnot until I examined the eggs that I discovered not one of ours among them!

Then I recalled having asked Mr. Wessel to help with our annual "Operation

"Easter Egg". For ten years we have saved and hardboiled the double-yolk goose eggs and si distributed them to children in Baltimore and Washington hospitals for Easter. We learned that such very large and very real eggs - some weighed as much as a pound and were as large a a foot in long corcumference - were extremely attractive to the ill youngsters. With the liquidation of our flock, except o for the wold geese and the Roberto menage, I had asked Mr. Wessel to save his infertile eggs so us to take to the hospitals.

In that box were eggs from five of the breeds Mr. Wessel "shows" in competition al over the country. It is iddifult to conceive of anyone capturing difficult more honors than his prize-winning geese annually earn him. Our happiness at being able to make the hospital stay a little more pleasant for the sick kinds drove all thoughts of our own eggs from our minds. My wife busied herself with the two-hour task od hardboiling and sterilizing these eggs while I got on the phone to make arrangements for their delivery.

The next day was "Good Friday", the day we always distributed the eggs. Early in the morning I left for the trip to Baltimore and Washington. The eggs were carefully wrapped to prevent breakage. I also had boxes of straw in which the hospitals could arrange the eggs to simulate a real nest. Late that afternoon, having supplied five hospitals with the nests and eggs, I returned home.

Once again, Mr. Wessel had been there in my absence. Once again he had left a box of eggs. This time every one was ours! And this was the very day they should have begun to "pip" the shell, the day the birth process was to have begun.

It was a very unhappy great-grandfather and goose breeder who answered my phone call. While he had left his farm to bring the easter eggs to me, something had happened to the heat switch on his incubator. By the time he returned, the heat had risen so high all the eggs had almost cooked. Not a single egg was viable.

All the old fellow could think about was the sixteen of our eggs that were lost. The 168 of his own due to hatch at the same time and the countless others due to hatch in the following several weeks, seemed to cause him little worry. His was a large financial loss. More, he lost a large proportion of the young from which he would have selected stock for both breeding and showing, stock from which he had hoped to improve his breeds and which might have enabled him to chortle even more over the other breeders he bested in competition.

He was disconsolate, so unhappy he was about to renounce his hobby. I was able to prevail upon him instead to borrow the one remaining incubator we hadn't loaned out and my spare supply of switches. He is coming for them today, when I'll remind him that a similar misfortune to us several years ago gave us Oskad H. Pumpernickel, who was easily worth more to us than all the other

goslings that we lost. As with Mr. Wessel, our trouble also ruined all the earliest eggs, those that would have been the largest goslings in the fall.

Despite the loss, we were happy that night. When we saw those eggs on television and realized how much happier so many sick kids were because of them, there was no question about it for us; it was more than worth the loss it had caused. We hoped Mr. Wessel felt the same way.

Meanwhile, Ingrid has a chance to help us out. She had taken to setting, of all things, on my birthday. Das had continued to lay a few eggs in the nest, which Ingreid continued to tend faithfully. We haven't seen her leave it for so much as a blade of grass, although we know she is regularly wetting herself down to keep the eggs at the proper humidity.

Roberto and Das are away on an Easter visit. They are part of an Easter barnyard display our feed cooperative has arranged for the city kids in Frederick. The entire parking lot has been fenced in and converted into a barnyard. I can just imagine Roberto's strutting as he escprts Das through the assemblage of chickens, banties, ducks, goats, lambs, calves and ponies, for he is the only gender there.